



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE SUPERVISION OF HIGH-SCHOOL TEACHING

HENRY C. MORRISON

State Department of Education, Hartford, Connecticut

The control of a high-school enterprise ordinarily shows five distinct phases, for each of which effective provision must be made. These are in order: (1) business administration, including financial arrangements, maintenance of plant, provision of equipment and other material; (2) recruitment of the teaching staff; (3) supervision of teaching; (4) school management, including routine of pupil control and care, upbuilding and conservation of school tone, organization and control of pupil activities, etc.; (5) co-ordination with other school enterprises below and above, including administration of the curriculum.

The head of the school must in the nature of efficient administration be primarily responsible for the conduct of all five divisions. In Nos. 1 and 5, he is essentially a member of the administrative staff of the superintendent, who is the co-ordinating head of the entire school system. In the cases of Nos. 2, 3, and 4, he is essentially the principal and should be subject only to the inspectorial and reviewing functions of the superintendent. When the superintendent insists on doing the principal's work for him, either a new superintendent or a new principal, or both, is indicated.

Nor can we admit the theory that school men are not "business men" and therefore ought not to be intrusted with No. 1. School business is just as much a business by itself as is the corner grocery, or the manufacturing plant at the other end of town. There is no particular reason why the small trader on the board of education, or the large trader for that

matter, should be presumed to be able to handle the routine business of the school plant, of laboratories, library, texts, and supplies, any better than the school man who knows the difference between a retort and a lexicon and knows when a defective piece of plumbing is flooding the basement. If a principal is incapable of handling the routine business of a high school, he should become capable with all convenient speed or else resign. He is not fit to govern boys.

In small schools, say up to one hundred and fifty pupils, the principal can commonly perform all administrative functions, and in the smaller schools of this group do some teaching as well. As we go up the scale, the principal must be relieved of all regular teaching and increasingly have administrative assistance, until in schools of over two thousand he ought to have always at least two full-time, well-trained administrative staff assistants above secretarial grade for the supervision of teaching and for the management of the pupil body.

Of the five phases of high-school administration in the American high school, No. 4 is commonly well done, or at least receives its due phase of attention. No. 5 is meticulously done so far as college relations are concerned, but not invariably done at all with respect to the lower schools. Nos. 1 and 2 are pretty likely to become bureaucratic through defective centralization and the exigencies of school politics. No. 3, which is certainly the most vital division of the five, is more than likely to be severely left alone. With this division this paper has to deal.

What then is involved in the supervision of teaching?

First of all, the principal must be a teacher himself, able to take a class and teach a topic himself, able to hold a class up to, let us say, 90 per cent. or over participating attention. It is wholly impossible to supervise teaching unless the supervisor can teach. No amount of facility in devising measurements

to apply to teachers' work, and no depth of learning in the principles of the educative process, infinitely valuable as these may be, can atone for lack of actual classroom teaching power. The situation is analogous to that in the engineering world, where the accomplished graduate of the technological school so often fails simply because he cannot himself set up a good job in the shop. He may never have to, but if he can't he is no engineer.

But isn't this requiring the impossible? How can any principal or other supervising officer teach all of the many courses offered in the modern high school? He doubtless cannot, but, if he is a master of one of the half-dozen or more types of teaching in a full high-school program, he will at least have teaching sense and will feel the difference between good teaching and bad in the other types. More than that, the writer ventures the prediction that, in the new world which is upon us, whoever aspires to the position and emoluments of high-school principal will have to know a good deal about teaching in most, if not all, of the courses in the school over which he expects to preside.

What do I mean by a "real teacher"? Well, certainly not the vague and impossible kind of saint so often portrayed by the inspirational addresses at teachers' conventions and in many books about teaching. I mean simply a person who can make an obscure point in a science lesson transparently clear to an ordinary class, or one who can take a modern language class of beginners and within a measurable time have them reading and using the language, or one whose class in English literature establishes a run on the local public library.

Accordingly, it is sound advice to the young principal who desires promotion and to the student who expects some day to be a supervisory officer to begin by sitting at the feet of a real teacher and learning the art. Fortunately, real teachers

are not so rare as to be inaccessible to most, although their ratio to lesson-hearers in the high school is pitifully small.

We have spoken of the half-dozen or more types of teaching in the high school. What are they?

1. *The language-arts*.—This type includes: (*a*) the composition side of English; (*b*) foreign language; (*c*) stenography. The pedagogy and methodology of this group is essentially the same throughout and is well known, though it is little observed in the ordinary high-school classroom. It does not differ essentially from the pedagogy and methodology of first-grade reading.

2. *The logic type*.—This includes mathematics, grammar of both English and foreign languages, the technical side of music.

3. *The pure practice type*.—This includes typewriting, penmanship, that part of mathematics which requires merely “automatic facility in execution,” the instrumental and vocal side of music. The psychology of this type is adequate and familiar to students. The pedagogy is fairly definite, though it needs much correction by checking up with the underlying psychology, such, for instance, as has been done and is being done for reading on the basis of the studies of Dodge, Huey, Dearborn, Judd, and others.

4. *Science*.—This includes the whole region of natural and physical science, much of household and mechanic arts, economics, government.

5. *Appreciation*.—In the secondary school this type of teaching includes very definitely literature as such, music in its emotional aspect, probably history, and phases of all types except No. 3.

6. *The shop type*.—This covers wood and iron manipulation, cooking and sewing, laboratory manipulation, accounting.

We have also used the term “participating attention.” Both because the practical bearing of the term may be obscure

and because the term has a very practical bearing on supervision, let us clear it up a bit.

As the supervisor passes from room to room, he will be pretty likely to find there rather definite kinds of situations.

First, he will very possibly find a class most of the members of which are listless, dreamy, the boys in slouching attitudes, the recitations mechanical and incredibly incomplete and inaccurate. There is neither attention nor participation. Such work is of course a waste of time and the public money, and a demoralizing influence in the school. If the work cannot be improved, the teacher ought to be dismissed. If nobody can be found to change the situation, the work would better be given up altogether.

Secondly, he will find a certain number of rooms in which the classes are alert, upright in their seats, very quiet, and the recitations usually good. This is much better. There is attention, but little evidence of normal participation as the adolescent naturally reveals participation. This kind of situation is very likely to impress very favorably the lay visitor, but the school man ought not to be satisfied.

Thirdly, he will find some rooms in which the classes are alert and eager, eyes with a certain characteristic expression, the rooms somewhat noisy perhaps, pupils apt to make comments or to offer corrections, individual recitations good and rather lengthy, and some pupils inclined to hold the floor. There is no doubt of either attention or participation.

The teacher in the first and second kinds of classes will usually be found seated, in the third almost always standing.

In building up his school the principal will aim to bring all class work to some type of the third kind of situation. His success, other things being equal, will be very likely to be measured by (a) increased ratio of his membership to the

membership of the elementary schools from which he draws
(*b*) rapid increase of the proportion of graduates to entrants.

The limits of this article forbid any full discussion of the problem of evaluating teachers in an objective way.

If the principal wishes to sort out his teachers from his lesson-hearers, a simple record of the percentage of participating attention found on his several visits is one good way to accomplish his purpose. If a series of visits to one teacher shows 100, 90, 75, 85, 60, 100, and to another, 20, 15, 10, 0, 25, 30, 20, he has an impressive objective comparison between two teachers as to their respective abilities to arouse and hold their classes—in other words, of their respective teaching power.

The evaluation of work accomplished, or of power gained, or of attainment secured, is another matter. A given standard assigned to a class cannot be credited wholly to the teacher who has had charge of the class for a given period. Other factors enter in, such as: (*a*) preparation of pupils; (*b*) adaptation of program and course to the mental age of pupils; (*c*) schedules being carried by pupils, and so on.

There are in general three methods of securing an objective measure of attainment.

In the first place, there are rapidly being formulated a series of standard tests, and standard methods of measurement. The principal ought to be interested and well informed about this development and competent in the technique of all the existing tests, but the young principal especially must be cautioned not to let his interest run away with his judgment. It is altogether probable that workable tests will be devised which will be applicable to the results of teaching of types 1, 2, and 3. It is equally probable that nothing which as yet has been foreshadowed will ever be successfully applied to types 4 and 5. Type 6 ordinarily furnishes its own tests.

Types 4 and 5, however, are measurable by the seeking out and noting of the modifications of behavior exhibited by the pupils out of the classroom and out of school. For instance, one of the best ways to test out the effectiveness of a literature teacher is to follow up the drift of his or her classes in withdrawals from the public library, not those books which are prescribed reading, but those which represent the free choice of pupils. If a given ninth-grade division, for example, shows at the beginning of the year, or early in the year, 20 per cent. substantial books, 40 per cent. trashy juveniles, and 40 per cent. no books at all, and at the end of the year 50 per cent. substantial books, 30 per cent. juveniles, and 20 per cent. no withdrawals, then the principal has objective evidence that his literature teaching is somewhat effective. Correspondingly, effective science teaching will nearly always reveal itself in the redirection which boys' interests show beyond the region of school control. Impeccable notebooks and good marks, or bad marks for that matter, are poor evidence, taken by themselves, of the effectiveness of the teaching.

There remains, of course, the time-honored examination as a test of attainment and a means of intellectual stock-taking, and the examination is not likely to be wholly replaced by other forms of testing. The disappointing returns from examinations within the school are likely to be due to the fact that the examination is pitched at a point not warranted by the teaching. It is either too hard or too easy to be a reliable index of the attainment of the class. Accordingly it becomes important for the principal to avail himself of some means of checking the examinations set by his different teachers. A simple method is the use of the properties of the normal distribution surface, which has in recent years become a veritable compass in the hands of the steersman of school work. If there is any considerable number of pupils taking the exami-

nation, and if, furthermore, the examination is a reasonable one, considering the teaching which has been done, the ratings given will arrange themselves roughly in a normal distribution. If now the examination was too hard, the numbers of pupils will be bunched toward the lower end of the surface, and the curve will be skewed in that direction. On the other hand, if the examination was too easy, the numbers will be bunched toward the upper end. The real index of the attainment of the class is the position of the mode of the surface on the axis of abscissas.

In general, measurements and similar methods of survey are intended to enable the supervising officer to secure a series of actual pictures of the situation from time to time existing in his school. He may then proceed to diagnose and take appropriate steps with some degree of assurance. The older school of physicians guessed at the disease and guessed at the treatment, the casual character of their procedure being mitigated more or less by successful experience. The older school of supervisors and principals, not entirely extinct, similarly tended to view a pedagogical situation in the light of their prejudices, which were often curious vestigial remains of the Puritan theology, and their procedure was one calculated to preserve their prejudices. The objective method produced the science of medicine, and it is likewise rapidly producing the science of school administration.

The principal, or in small systems the superintendent, still has an important problem, which he ought not to have, in the training of his staff. We have as yet few, if any, effective training institutions for high-school teachers, though we have many excellent institutions in which prospective teachers can become well versed in the theory of the educative process. Consequently, having sorted out his lesson-hearers, the principal must usually convert the promising material among them

into teachers. This is commonly, in the main, a question of technique, though technique ought certainly to be fortified with constant reading on the theory side.

The first and not altogether easiest step, then, is to lay out a workable reading course. As the writer sees it, this reading course ought to include three phases.

In the first place, the teacher ought to be and must be a constant student of the subject-matter which he or she proposes to teach. The first step to pedagogical respectability is ever-growing mastery of the courses which the teacher proposes to teach.

In the second place, the teacher ought to become interested in, and to become a student of, the whole educative process, from its biological foundations to the results of the most recent psychological investigation.

Finally, there is in print more or less good discussion of the methodology of most of the types of high-school teaching.

Further than this, each of these teachers ought to be persuaded to undertake some good university summer work.

No amount of study of books or pursuit of university courses, however, will put a teacher in possession of an effective technique. Such is not their purpose, nor ought it to be expected of them. Technique comes through observing technique in others and practicing it under the observation of those who possess it. That is true in every profession and trade. How, then, is the principal to develop teaching technique in his "lesson-hearers"?

In the first place, as suggested above, the principal ought himself to be able to demonstrate in at least one of the high-school types of teaching. That means taking a class and teaching while the teacher observes, and repeating until the teacher under training catches the knack. Of course, considerable tact and good management are necessary to prevent

the process from discrediting the teacher with the pupils. In the larger schools a department head ought to be able to take the place of the principal.

A few state education offices maintain itinerant demonstration teachers in some subjects, and no doubt many could do so to advantage. If such agencies for rapid training are available, they should be used. If they are not available, the state education office should be urged to make them available. A variant of this opportunity is occasionally to be found in teachers' institutes, where a given instructor employs a demonstration class and perhaps improvises some method of giving attending teachers some brief practice.

A third common method is to send teachers to visit good technicians in other schools. Provided this plan is taken seriously, it ought to be measurably productive. But the occasional "visiting day" will hardly serve the purpose. Rather ought the visiting teacher to be given leave of absence for the purpose, for a week perhaps, and then later on for another week.

I realize that this attempt at training teachers in service is giving the principal a large order. It will prove a severe test of his powers of leadership, but if the principal is really what he purports to be, and not merely a lord high executioner of recalcitrant pupils whom his teachers cannot manage, he will rise to the occasion. And leadership means not only personal adaptation to the task which is largely inborn, but, also, a full and respectable acquaintanceship with the literature of his profession, which must be acquired and which itself tends to arouse native powers of leadership. Elementary teachers sometimes accuse their secondary colleagues of living in ignorance of their pedagogical deficiencies. Most superintendents will agree that the accusation is too often well founded. Conviction of sin is a necessary means of

grace. This is good psychology as well as sound homiletics. But the bringing of conviction is neither an easy nor a welcome task, for the judicial ermine is not at present conferred upon the high school principal. Fortunately, there has come into his hands in these latter days a more humane, if less august, investiture, for the impersonal method of objective measurement of the results of teaching furnishes a truthful mirror in which the principal may first behold himself and which he may then with confidence present to his subordinate.